

Choosing Representation: Institutions and Powers for Decentralized Natural Resource Management

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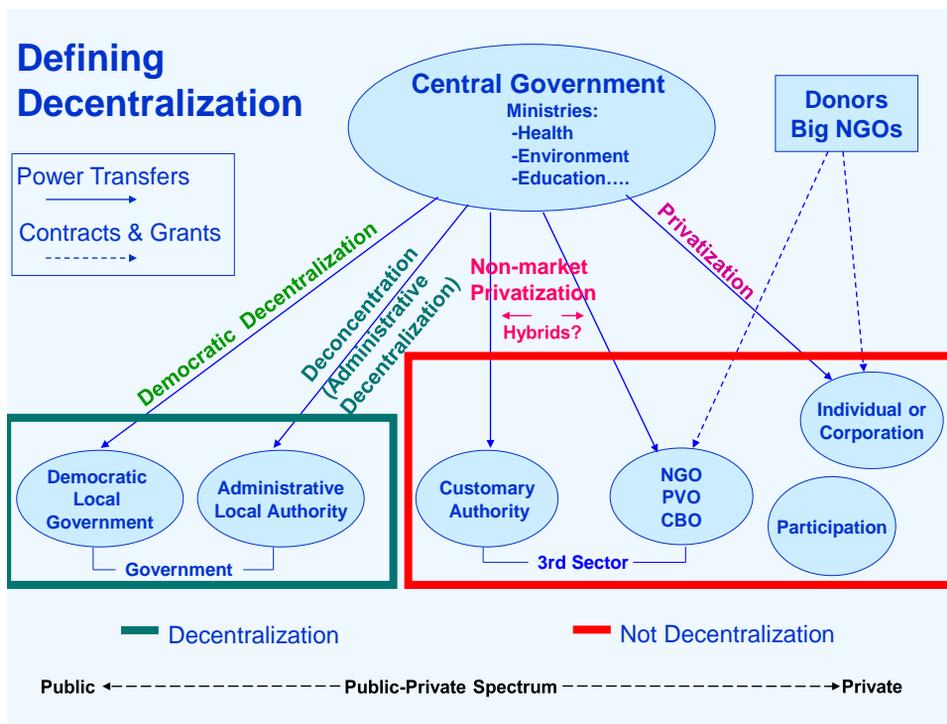
Today's Talk

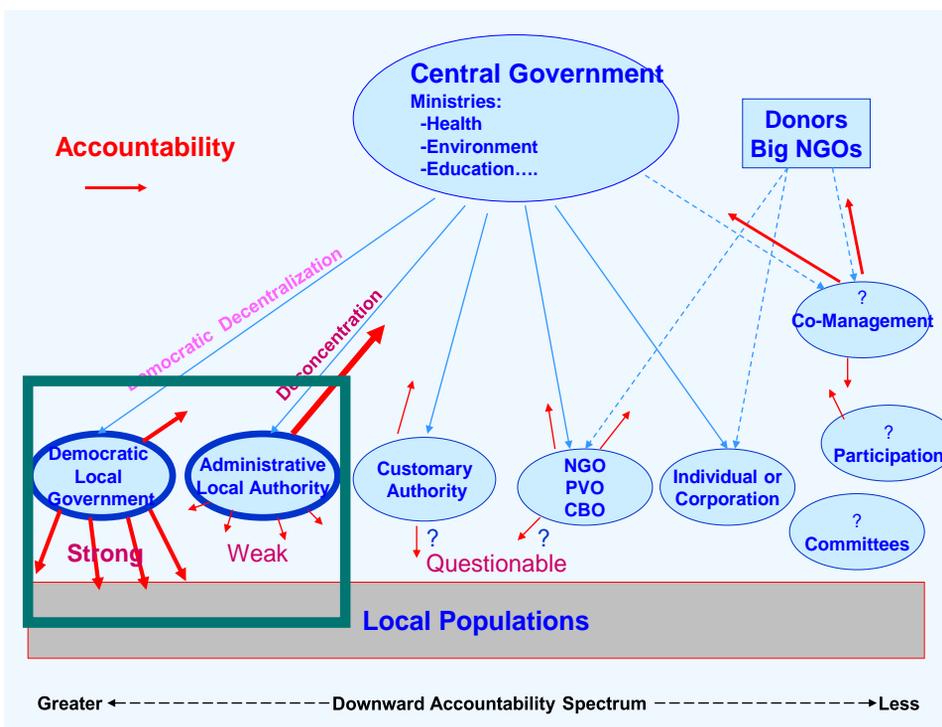
- ❖ **Program:** Decentralization and Environment Comparative Research Program
- ❖ **Analytic Framework:** Actors, Powers and Accountability Research Framework
- ❖ **Findings:** Decentralization in Practice
 - ↪ What is happening in the name of decentralization?
 - ↪ Why?
 - ↪ Focus on Implementation rather than Outcomes
- ❖ **Recommendations:** Options and Opportunities

Defining Decentralization



❖ A transfer of powers from central government to lower levels *IN* a political administrative territorial hierarchy.





Why Decentralize? Theoretical Mechanisms of Decentralization Benefit

Advertised Benefits

- ❖ Enfranchisement, Equity, Efficiency, Development, Better Resource Management, Better service delivery, Benefit retention....

Mechanisms → Local Authorities are believed to:

- ❖ Better match services to needs and aspirations (public choice theory)
- ❖ Reduce transaction costs (new institutional eco.) by proximity allowing:
 - ↪ Mobilizing local knowledge and skills for collective/public good
 - ↪ Mobilizing local labor for collective projects
 - ↪ Improved coordination among local programs
- ❖ Balance of negative and positive outcomes in decision making (economic theory of "internalizing externalities")

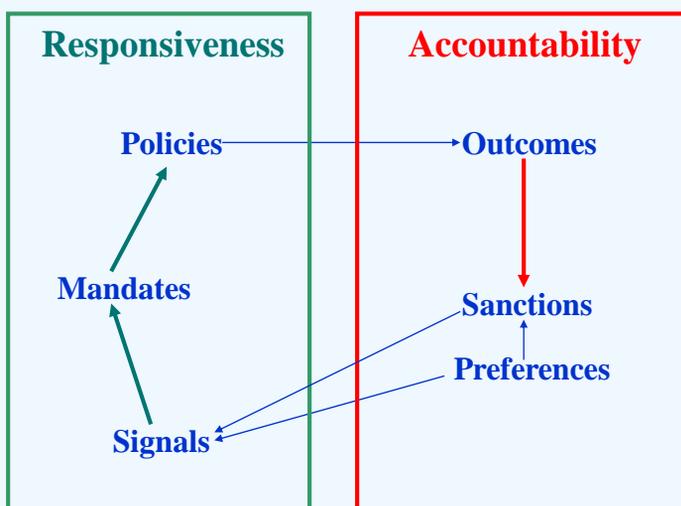
**→ ALL ARGUMENTS IMPLY INCLUSIVE & INTEGRATIVE
MECHANISM: I.e. Representation
= Downwardly Accountable INSTITUTIONS *With* POWERS**

Representation Policy Model

- ❖ Representation = When authorities act in the best interest of the public [Pitkin; Manin, Przeworski and Stokes]
- ❖ Representation is the active ingredient making decentralized institutions effective [Smoke]

REPRESENTATION

= Responsiveness &/or Accountability



Elements of Representation

- ❖ **Responsiveness** = f(Powers/Capabilities [internal powers])
- ❖ **Accountability** = f(Sanctions or Accountability mechanisms)

Actors, Powers & Accountability Framework

- ❖ **Positive Outcomes are Expected from:**
 - ↪ Local **Actors** (individuals or Institutions)
 - ↪ With **Powers** (executive, legislative and judicial: discretion+capabilities to exercise them)
 - ↪ With **Accountability** to the Local Population

Implementation Findings: What Happens in Practice?

Choice of Institutions in Practice

Power Choices in Practice

Government Tactics for Retaining Control

→ Choice of Institutions

→ Resisting Power Transfers

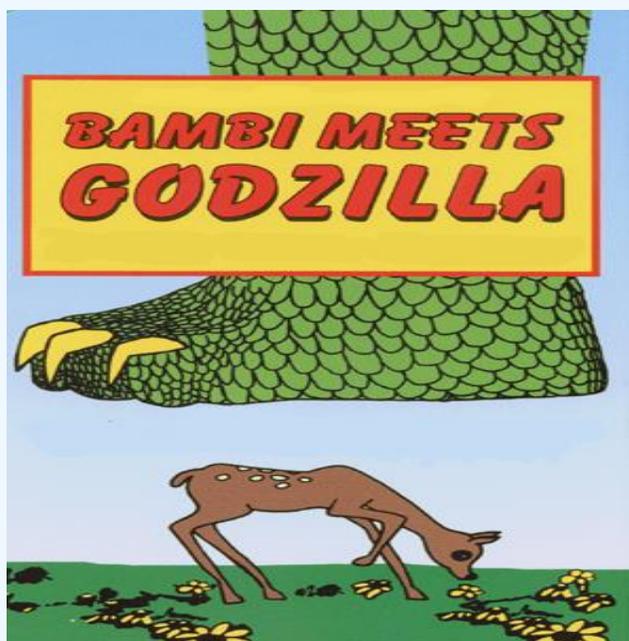
Getting the Institutions Right?

- ❖ Decentralization theory is an IF-THEN proposition [out of new institutionalism]
 - ↪ If we have the right institutions with the right powers
 - ↪ Then we get all these positive outcomes

- ❖ But we're not getting to 'IF' in most cases

- **New institutionalism is being stomped out by a larger set of political-economic forces**
[Sort of like "Bambi Meets Godzilla"]

New Institutionalism Meets Political Economy



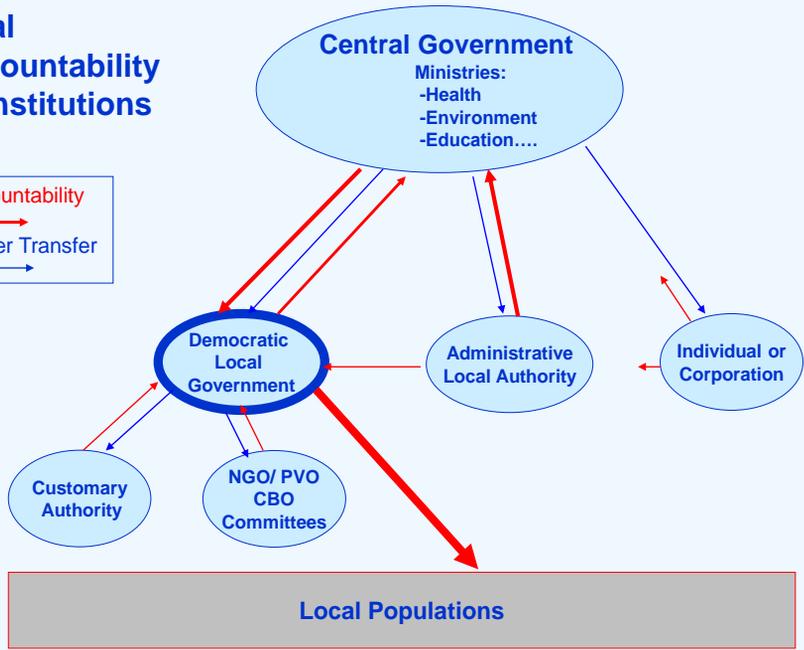
CONCLUSIONS

❖ What do we need to do?

Subsidiarity Principles

**Principles of Institutional
Choice**

Ideal Accountability of Institutions



THE END*

